

File Legislation in House, Senate to Develop Practical Solution to Serious Border Problem

WASHINGTON - With wait times skyrocketing at border crossings across the U.S.-Mexico border, Congressman **Ciro D. Rodriguez** (D-TX) and U.S. Senator **Kay Bailey Hutchison** (R-TX) today introduced legislation to study the scope and impact of wait times at both southern and northern points of entry along the U.S. border. The study would provide the first set of comprehensive data and statistics on border wait times, and would help address the issue of increased wait times on the border. On the Senate bill, bill cosponsors include Sens. **Charles Schumer** (D-NY), **Pete Domenici** (R-NM), **Jeff Bingaman** (R-NM), **Jon Kyl** (R-AZ), and **Patty Murray** (D-WA). The House bill is cosponsored by Reps. **Silvestre Reyes** (D-TX), **Rubén Hinojosa** (D-TX), **Solomon Ortiz** (D-TX), **Henry Cuellar** (D-TX), and **Raul Grijalva** (D-AZ).

“While it is clear that crossing points across the US-Texas border are failing to provide a reliable timetable for transportation of goods and services, reliable statistics and concrete information are not currently available for stakeholders to make informed choices on how to solve the border wait time problem,” **said Congressman **Ciro D. Rodriguez****. “No two ports of entry are the same, and likewise the solutions to wait times issues will differ from port to port. The Hutchison-Rodriguez bill will produce reliable traffic and economic data, enabling local, state, and Federal decision-makers to formulate an effective and reasonable solution for border wait times. Senator Hutchison and I are working closely to protect the vibrant economies of our border towns and cities, while meeting critical requirements for homeland security along the border.”

“I believe that we must protect our nation from all security threats along our borders, yet serious traffic delays affecting the legitimate flow of commerce help no one and disrupt our state's and nation's economy,” **said Sen. **Hutchison****. “Our bill will help us determine a practical solution to this serious problem at our land ports of entry.”

“The Texas Border Coalition salutes Senator Hutchison and Representative Rodriguez for their leadership in seeking long-term solutions to border wait times,” **said **Eagle Pass Mayor **Chad Foster******

, Chairman of the
Texas Border Coalition

. “The rising delays of pedestrian and vehicular traffic at the Texas-Mexico ports of entry

are harming local, state, and national economies without benefit to national security. Our reviews show U.S. procedures are to blame and we look forward to working with Senator Hutchison, Representative Rodriguez and other leaders in Congress to demonstrate that the borders can be secured while assuring the flow of legitimate travelers and business between United States and Mexico.”

“The Border Trade Alliance (BTA) appreciates the strong leadership of Senator Hutchison and Congressman Rodriguez on border issues,” said **J. Art Macias**, Chairman of the

Border Trade Alliance.

“This legislation provides the ability to quantify wait times at our land ports of entry, which will allow policy-makers to best identify solutions to address the growing concern over wait times and ensure for both our economic and physical security.”

According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics at the U.S. Department of Transportation, the value of trade using surface transportation between the United States and Canada or Mexico was estimated at \$760 billion in 2006. Cross-border traffic included 6.6 million trucks and over 30 million personal vehicles crossing the U.S.-Canada border, and over 4.7 million trucks and over 88 million personal vehicles crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. In Texas alone, over 4 million vehicles came across the Texas-Mexico border in 2006, including almost 9.9 million persons.

The Border Wait Times Study Act will direct studies by the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Department of Transportation, in consultation with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to accurately analyze and provide empirical data for traffic patterns and volume of commercial and passenger vehicles at international land ports of entry. Additionally, it will document the economic impacts these wait times are having on the US and its border communities on the northern and southern borders. This legislation would require the study to be completed within six months of the enactment of the legislation.

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